this Government as an additional instrumentality of foreign policy. It has employed it successfully. That is precisely the point. If you measure that aspect of it, the Government's policy has been entirely successful. The three cricket matches have taken place, the hockey matches have taken place; and the hon. Prime Minister has had a path-breaking, historic, visit to Pakistan, which is a measure of the success.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Mr. Chairman, Sir, my small supplementary is: whether it is a fact that in 1991 ...*(Interruptions)*... I am putting a supplementary. Don't go on dictating to us every day like this. This is not the way.

Sir, my supplementary is: whether it is a fact that in 1991 a similar threat was issued during the regime of the earlier Congress Government and the match was called off and the tour was cancelled. At that time, what were the conditions? I would like to know from the Minister whether it is a fact such a tour was cancelled because of a threat during the previous regime also. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please let him reply.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, in the context of improving Indo-Pak relations, the hon. Prime Minister has repeatedly stated that "Let us not keep looking backwards, let us learn from the past and let us move towards the future." It is because of that and it is because of what he has done during his historic visit to Pakistan, that our relations with them are improving. This visit has demonstrated that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Efficient functioning of Government Machinery

*45. DR. RAJA RAMANNA:
KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question No. 21 given in the Rajya Sabha on May 28,1998, and state:

(a) the progress made on various initiatives for improving the efficient functioning of Government machinery;

(b) whether Office Procedure Automation (OPA) which was claimed to be operational since 1993, has been introduced in Ministries to computerise file movements by using the developed software package;

(c) if so, the names of such Ministries/Departments and the achieved measure of efficiency satisfaction; and

(d) the number of officers who have been deputed for making themselves aware of new developments in computer technology as applied to administration efficiency?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) The progress on various initiatives for improving the functioning of the government machinery is reported as under:

(i) Department of Administratives Reforms and Public Grievances continued to extend help and advice to the Ministries/Departments in the area of Organisation and Methods. The performance of three Ministries/Departments of the Government of India in the area of Organisation and

Methods has been studied during 1998-99 and they have been advised to take corrective measures.

(ii) All the Departments/Ministries have been requested to implement a time bound programme for converting into electronic form all the non-classified rules, regulations, circulars and information relating to the work of different Ministries etc. They have also been requested to make five-year plans for increasing Information Technology usage. The Planning Commission have agreed that Ministries may allocate 2-3% of their Plan budgets for programmes/schemes relating to Information Technology.

(iii) On the initiative of the Government, over 40 Departments undertook, through expert task forces or by internal exercises, a detailed review of all laws, regulations and procedures adminstered by them including those involving approval of State projects. Action has been initiated by a number of Ministries/Departments for suitable amendments to laws, regulations and procedures based on the review. The Commission on Review of Adminstrative Laws, constituted in May, 1998, submitted its report on 30th September, 1998. The important recommendations of the Commission include recommendation for repeal of almost 50% of Central Laws (1300 out of about 2500 Laws), expeditious amendments to a critical list of 109 identified Acts, documentation of administrative laws (rules, regulations, executive instruction etc.) by all the Ministries/Departments, harmonisation of statutes and laws with reference to the perspective of domestic and foreign investors, trade and industry, consumers, exporters and importers, and development of a viable alternative disputes resolution machinery.

Copies of the report of the Commission have been sent to all Ministries/Departments of the Government of India and Chief Secretaries of all State/Union Territory Governments in November, 1998 for examination of the various recommendations contained therein and for devising suitable action plan for implementation of the recommendations. The Government have constituted a Standing Committee under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Personnel) for monitoring the follow-up action on implementation of the recommendations contained in the report.

(iv) Various steps are being taken by Ministries/Departments to delegate and decentralise powers to field units and to other levels of Government to enable decisions and service delivery at the lowest operational level.

(b) and (c) The Office Procedure Automation (OPA) package has been in use in the Ministry of Civil Aviation since 1993. In addition, it is operational in Ministries like the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers (Department of Fertilizers), Ministry of Surface Transport, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions in varying degrees. This package has also been given to about 26 other Ministries and organisations for implementation. Demonstration-cum-training of the package has been conducted in these Ministries/organisations. There is, however, no centralised data on the improvements in efficiency resulting from introduction of the package.

(d) About 20,000 officers/staff are trained in a year by NIC to make them aware of new developments in Computer Technology. About 600 officers/staff have been trained for using the OPA package. Apart from this, different Ministries and Departments periodically depute officers and staff to different institutions for training on using computer.